



WENDY THOM

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 8, MONTANA OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, 10 W. 15th STREET, SUITE 3200
HELENA, MONTANA 59626

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Honorable Judy Martz
Governor
State of Montana
Capitol Station
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Martz:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the town of Libby. Also, on behalf of Robbie Roberts, Regional Administrator, EPA Region VIII, thank you for meeting with us on July 31. In both your letter and at our meeting, you asked about our progress in cleaning up the community, and the continued involvement of Paul Peronard as EPA's Team Leader.

In 2002, EPA expects to continue the cleanups at two former vermiculite processing plants and surrounding areas that were contaminated by activities at these facilities, and cleanups at both the middle and high schools. Also, EPA is preparing for the residential and business cleanups by screening over 3000 properties in the Libby area for the presence of asbestos source materials such as vermiculite insulation in buildings and/or vermiculite products in the yards. EPA is planning to complete cleanups at approximately 50 of the most contaminated of these properties in 2002. Lastly, the agency is working with the community to put in place the infrastructure to initiate large scale residential/commercial properties cleanup during the 2003 construction season. An example of this type of activity is construction of the asbestos disposal cell in the local landfill.

EPA indicated that it would complete cleanup in the town of Libby in three construction seasons, 2002, 2003, and 2004. EPA remains committed to that schedule. Actually, most of the large scale cleanups in Libby will be completed by the end of the 2003 construction season. The remaining work is expected to be cleanups of individual residential and commercial properties. EPA plans to carry out the indoor clean ups through out the year. EPA, however, did not finalize and sign the attic insulation removal Action Memorandum until May of this year. Consequently, our screening for indoor asbestos contaminated insulation at residential and commercial properties was somewhat delayed.

I do have a concern about our cleanup. It is possible that there will be properties that have only a very slight level of asbestos contamination, i.e., it will not be clear if the level of the vermiculite contamination poses a health risk. If the cost to cleanup all of these properties is relatively low, EPA believes that is probably best to simply undertake the cleanups of these properties. If the cost to cleanup all of these properties is high, however, EPA will probably have



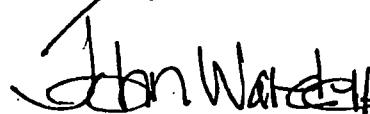
to carry out a risk assessment. That effort could take approximately a year to complete. That means that this group of properties could not be completed until sometime in 2005.

EPA will "delist" parts of the town of Libby when clean up has occurred. The Agency will be happy to seek your input on our "delisting" plan.

I believe that the team that EPA has put in place to complete our work at Libby is an outstanding team. In addition to Paul, it includes Jim Christiansen, and Wendy Thomi. Paul will continue to be the team leader for the time frame that the removal activities continue at Libby. Wendy has been working with Paul to implement community outreach activities since EPA became involved in Libby. Jim has been working with Paul for approximately one year to coordinate the screening activities being completed at the residential and commercial properties. He will also direct the clean ups of these properties. It is likely that Paul will be needed at a future point in time to take on duties in EPA's counter-terrorism program. Nevertheless, Paul will continue to be a very vital member of the Libby clean up team until work in the town of Libby itself is finished.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me at (406) 457-5001.

Sincerely,



John Wardell
Director
Montana Office

cc: J. Sensibaugh, Director, MDEQ
M. Dodson, 8EPR-ARA
T. O'Hair, Governor's Office